

FSC Focus



“Focusing on Your Needs First”

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Financial Services Center



VA Franchise Fund (VA Enterprise Centers) Information Technology Conference (ITC) Session

**Title: Leveraging Information Technology to Provide
Comprehensive Business Solutions for Today's Government**

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VA's Franchise Fund (VA Enterprise Centers) is a “one stop shop” for comprehensive business solutions for today's Government. From an ultra-modern computer center with state-of-the-art equipment (Austin Automation Center—AAC), a debt collection center that employs every collection tool available to Federal agencies (Debt Management Center—DMC), a Federal financial solutions and service provider of a complete suite of financial management services (Financial Services Center—FSC), a sole provider of a unique Federal law enforcement training program that emphasizes customer/patient safety in all actions and uses aggressive action only as a last resort (Law Enforcement Training Center—LETC), a center that performs background investigations/adjudications and processes fingerprint and ID cards (Security and Investigations Center—SIC), to a cave that serves as a highly secure records storage center (VA Records Center and Vault—VA RC&V).

A panel of VA Franchise Fund subject matter experts will share information on how they leverage information technology to provide comprehensive business solutions for today's Government at the 2003 ITC Conference on Wednesday August 6, 2003, from 2:15 – 4:45 — Austin Convention Center (Room 18C)

The VA Enterprise Centers will host a panel session on Wednesday August 6, 2003, from 2:15-4:45 p.m. in Room 18C. Subject matter experts will share how we leverage information technology to provide comprehensive business solutions for today's Government. Another key goal of this session is to raise internal awareness throughout VA, share lessons learned, and promote the best practices of our Enterprise Centers. Our product offerings directly support the Department's goal of delivering world-class service to veterans and their families through effective communication and management of people, technology, business processes, and economic resources.

VA Franchise Fund ITC Session, Cont'd

Topics will focus on the robust system solutions available in the following areas:

Sharing Information Through Business Applications

An AAC panel member will provide examples of how they use Web-enabled technology to share knowledge bases across VA and other Federal agencies to improve both operations and service delivery to the American citizen.

Responding to Heightened Building and Network Security

VA, like other Federal agencies, is quickly shifting to underscore the importance of building and network security. S&IC and the AAC panel members will provide examples of special initiatives that were taken to address heightened building and network security requirements. In addition, brief synopses of Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP) which focus on the people and processes necessary for sustained operations during natural or man-made disasters.

Keeping Federal Records Secure

In conjunction with its successful expansion, the panel member from the VA RC&V will share the best practices (inventory, labeling, and shelving) they used to transfer Veterans Health Administration record holdings once stored in 14 National Archives and Records Administration regional records centers across the Nation into one centralized location.

Moving to Automated Payments

VA, like other Government agencies, is increasing access to electronic benefits and information in an effort to eliminate paper. Both of these e-initiatives impact how we make payments to vendors and employees, as well as perform payment processing functions. The panel member from the FSC will share examples of how they are eliminating paperwork and manual tasks by moving into the electronic transmission of information, forms, and documents.

Maximizing Collection Activities

As a leader in the Federal debt management community and a complete accounts receivable resource, the DMC negotiates repayment plans, administers automated recovery programs, makes cold calls to debtors, oversees the entire collection process, and employs every collection tool (referral to locator services, private collection agencies, and computer matching) available to Federal agencies. The DMC panel member will share the results of their collection efforts. He will also provide an update on the status of their online collection project.

We strongly encourage you to participate in the VA Franchise Fund training opportunities at the ITC and engage the panel about their lessons learned, best practices and future plans. Your proactive participation (questions, comments and ideas) will enable the VA Franchise Fund (VA Enterprise Centers) to benefit from the wealth of information that will be shared. We look forward to using this panel to further strengthen the collaborative bonds we have successfully forged in the past with our VA customers. Contact Leisa Davis at leisa.davis@mail.va.gov (202) 273-9475 if you're interested in attending the session at the 2003 ITC on Wednesday, August 6, 2003, from 2:15-4:45 p.m. in Room 18C. See you there!

For more information on the VA Franchise Fund (VA Enterprise Centers), visit us on the Web at <http://www.va.gov/fund>.

FASPAC/IPAC IMPLEMENTATION

The Intragovernmental Payment and Collection (IPAC) system is a major component of the Government Online Accounting Link System II (GOALS II). IPAC provides a standardized intraagency fund transfer mechanism.

Unlike the Department of the Treasury's (Treasury) previous Online Payment and Collection (OPAC) System accessible via modem on a stand alone personal computer, IPAC is an Internet application that FSC staff can access via an Internet browser. With Treasury's leap into current technology, the FSC was able to develop Financial Accounting Service Payments and Collections (**FASPAC**), an application for use by those wishing to streamline their IPAC processing.

FASPAC

FASPAC IMPLEMENTATION TO BEGIN WITH VHA

FASPAC is a locally designed application which transmits Web-encoded data into IPAC, Treasury's Web-based application, and interfaces transaction data into FMS through the FSC's SQL server.

We designed FASPAC to eliminate redundant data encoding and streamline an extremely time consuming process. Prior

to FASPAC's implementation, stations encoded and faxed or e-mailed their IPAC request form(s) to the Cash Management Division's 224 Processing Section for entry into IPAC. Once the request form was returned by Treasury with an assigned document reference number as confirmation, technicians manually recorded the collection or disbursement into FMS. This process took approximately a week or more due to the high volume of requests received daily. Any discrepancies or missing data in the documentation would cause further delays.

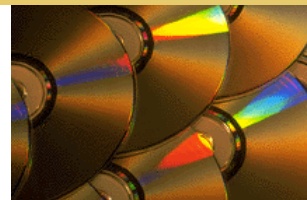
The FASPAC implementation reduces processing time to 2 days — 1 day to process the IPAC and 1 day to record the FMS transaction. Stations will access FASPAC via the FSC's Web site and will encode their data locally. The FSC then downloads the data entered via FASPAC into IPAC. The following day, stations receive notification of acceptance with a document reference number assigned by Treasury. If the document rejects from this process, a separate e-mail notification to the station program coordinator(s) explains the reason for the reject. The station will then make the necessary corrections and resubmit the data. In addition, FASPAC allows the user to select the FMS transaction(s) needed to record the proper general ledger. With this information, FASPAC

(local application on SQL server) then appends the document reference number assigned by Treasury and transmits the transaction to FMS during the nightly process. FASPAC automation expedites the IPAC process providing increased efficiency in transferring and recording intergovernmental transactions.

Each facility wishing to use FASPAC will appoint a FASPAC administrator who will have the ability to add and delete users at their facility. To sign up for FASPAC please contact Charles Harpel at 512-460-5021 or Janis Keplinger at 512-460-5198.

If you do not wish to enter your IPAC requests online but want to continue to fax, e-mail or send requests through the postal system, you may still continue to do so. The Financial Accounting Service (FAS) will continue to process those documents as usual. If you have any questions, please call Janis Keplinger at 512-460-5198.

Note: This implementation phase applies to VHA only. VBA implementation will follow in the near future.



Special Instructions for Zegato Pilot Sites

On May 23, 2003, VA awarded the e-Travel contract to Zegato Solutions, Inc. Effective June 1, 2003, Zegato began charging a \$21 processing fee for each voucher. This fee applies to those Travel Plans (authorizations) initiated after June 1, 2003.

Travelers who contact the Zegato Help Desk for assistance in booking flights, cars, hotels, or emergency travel will pay an additional \$15 surcharge in addition to the Zegato processing fee. Therefore, we encourage stations to utilize the automated reservations module which is part of the Zegato travel system

in lieu of contacting the Zegato Help Desk to avoid the \$15 surcharge. Additionally, employees may send e-mail to the online "Quality Agent" to avoid the \$15 surcharge.

To ensure that Zegato fees are properly recorded in FMS, the pilot sites should follow the instructions below:

When preparing expense reports (travel vouchers) travelers **should not** claim the \$21 fee or any known \$15 surcharges as miscellaneous expenses. An automatic fee collection process is being developed. Stations will be notified when the automatic

fee process begins. For the time until the automatic fee collection process is developed, FSC staff has been placed in the approval chain as the final approver. They will review the vouchers to ensure the Zegato fee is posted appropriately. If the fee is claimed on the voucher, FSC will return the voucher to the traveler with instructions for processing correctly.

For any questions, please contact Rhonda Ivie at 512-460-5070 or send an e-mail to rhonda.ivie@mail.va.gov.

GSA Smart Pay Program **Rebate**

The FSC will distribute the rebate amount earned from Citibank under the GSA Smart Pay Program for purchase card, centrally billed, and individual billed travel for the period April 1 through June 30, 2003. The FSC will record the rebate amount in each facility's suspense clearing account, 36F3875. To distinguish the different rebates for each product line, the FSC is using an alpha character at the end of each unapplied deposit number (P for Purchase, T for Centrally

Billed Travel, and I for Individual Billed Travel). Each facility must then distribute these funds to the appropriate fund or appropriation (see note). The percentage used to calculate the rebate for purchase card averages to .010270 percent. The percentage used to calculate the rebate for centrally billed travel averages to .008800 percent. The percentage used to calculate the rebate for individual billed travel averages to .000959 percent.

Note: When a purchase card

rebate is due the supply fund, the facility should use a TR 49 transaction to record supply fund rebates.

The FSC also provides a net expenditures report for each product line. The reports contain the amount expended during the rebate period mentioned above and will be transmitted to the same routing queue as the other Credit Card System (CCS) reports for each station. It is also available on Rogers Software Design (RSD) as a

GSA Smart Pay Program Rebate, Cont'd

Centralized Accounting for Local Management (CALM) report under form name RMCJ. These reports will assist your staff in determining the amount to distribute to the appropriate fund at your station level.

NOTE: The data to produce the report for the purchase card program exists in the CCS database; transactions recorded using the default accounting string may have been transferred to other cost elements. The purchase card net expenditure report will contain the following information:

1. Station number
2. Budget Fiscal Year/ Appropriation/Fund
3. Accounting Classification Code (ACC)
4. Amount by ACC
5. Total by Fund
6. Station total

The data to produce the report for centrally billed travel exists in the CCS database. Since centrally billed travel transactions do not have a master accounting code string, this report will contain only the following information:

1. Station number
2. Station total

Citibank provides the data for the Individual Billed Travel Program. Therefore, the Individual Billed Travel Net Expenditure Report will only contain the following information:

1. Station number
2. Amount

If you have any questions, please contact Daryl Clark at (512) 460-5072.

Financial Services Center

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Check out the other VA Enterprise Centers

Austin Automation Center ▪ Debt Management Center ▪ Security and Investigation Center
 ▪ VA Record Center and Vault ▪ Law Enforcement Training Center
<http://www.va.gov/fund>

VISIT US ON THE WEB!

WWW.FSC.VA.GOV